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S E C R E T SANAA 001590

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/02/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [PTER](#) [ETTC](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: YEMEN: LATEST WEAPONS BUYBACK CACHE

Classified By: Ambassador Edmund J. Hull, for Reasons 1.5 (c) and (d)

11. (S/NF) During a July 1 telcon, President Saleh informed Ambassador that Yemen is actively engaged in non-proliferation efforts and instructed Brigadier General Ali Shater to coordinate a viewing of ROYG proceeds from the past few months of weapons buyback collection efforts. Shater later invited Ambassador Hull, accompanied by a team of USG experts of his choosing (namely FBI, DAO, CIA, etc.) to visit the Yemeni Special Forces Camp on the morning of July 2nd.

12. (S/NF) Upon entering the hanger, the Embassy team, comprised of the Amb, DATT, ORCA, and POL, observed that the items displayed were different than those seen in late January 2003. The ordinance, on the whole, was older and included items not previously displayed, including:

- SAM-18s
- Strella 2
- Strella 3
- AT-7
- RPGs
- plastique
- blasting caps

13. (S/NF) Although expected, Brigadier General Ali Shater was not present. The overview and tour was given by General Yahya Abdullah. Ambassador noted that it is important to continue these collection efforts, especially in light of recent events in Abyan and Riyadh. When asked about the disposition of the previous buyback proceeds, Abdullah said that useable ordinance was incorporated into Ministry of Defense stockpiles, while surplus items were destroyed. Abdullah agreed to allow Post to view the destruction in the future, which would be more systematic, noting that in the past ROYG destruction efforts had been piecemeal.

14. (S/NF) Ambassador said that the USG would like to have a DIA team visit Yemen to assist ROYG to inventory past and future collection efforts. (Comment: This offer was previously rejected by Brigadier General Shater in April 2003. End comment.) While Abdullah and the other working level officials agreed in principle, they referred the final decision to the Minister of Defense. General Abdullah said that pending legislation would outlaw the trade in heavy weapons and institute controls on the trade of light weaponry, like Kalashnikovs. He said ROYG will push hard to get this legislation adopted, but in the interim ROYG is actively engaged in working within tribal laws to collect as many weapons as possible. Referring to U.S. cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard and the Yemeni Special Forces, Abdullah noted that the Yemen military appreciates this ongoing cooperation and wants to expand it to include the weapons buyback program.

15. (S/NF) Ossama Al-Shami of Presidential Protocol called Post on the afternoon of July 2 to request a meeting between Brigadier General Shater and the Ambassador. The meeting has been scheduled for July 6th.

16. (S/NF) Begin comment: ROYG had multiple TV cameras and photographers covering the Ambassador's 7/2 walk-through of the YSOF facility, and the efforts of his team to collect data on the items recovered. ROYG will use this event to showcase their ongoing arm control efforts, and to ensure their neighbors, especially Saudi Arabia, and the international community that Yemen is committed to combating weapons smuggling and terror. End comment.

HULL